

Editorial

The issue of globalization is unquestionably an inexhaustible object of reflection and research. To tackle it on a permanent basis is not only an academic pursuit but also a political commitment.

The collection of articles presented in this volume contribute decisively to the furthering of these two dimensions both as a research need and as a political and utopian concern. The contributions reflect the meanders and labyrinths of the globalization process, be it at a structural level or at a more specific dimension. A common denominator among the contributors to this volume is the endeavor to perceive the movement of deconstruction of something already established and the introduction of a new, unfamiliar, enigmatic, obscure instance which needs to be deciphered. This endeavor is recurrent with the concern for the civilizational processes of this new order. The negativization of the State, of the rights, of citizenship, of labor. The affirmation of a public individual both desocialized and deinstitutionalized, of ephemeral projects, unstable perspectives, financialization of life, autobiographization, immediate utopias.

The reader is presented with a collection of articles, some showing a strong political Economy orientation and some being informed by the premises of Political Science and Sociology, all of them focusing on the social dimension of globalization.

Alves discusses what he calls the socio-metabolism of barbarism with its profound psycho-social implications in societal reproduction, in the context of the globalization crisis. His analysis then focuses on phenomena of global capitalism, such as desocialization and labor precarization and the crisis of social policies. The author defines socio-metabolism of barbarism as a critical-analytical matrix able to identify the expanded societal complex of the most diverse psycho-social irrationalities, among which the multiple forms of objective (and subjective) labor precarization and of live work can be cited. The material basis of the socio-metabolism of barbarism is the new regime of accumulation and societal reproduction of global capitalism, characterized by predominance of financial capital and of financierization of capitalist richness. The structural crisis of capitalism aggravates some systemic qualities of late capitalism, which the author calls *manipulatory capitalism* expressed in *toyotism*. By placing the financierization of the capitalist richness as the structuring element of the systemic logic of capital, the

great industrial enterprise tends to incorporate the spirit of financial capital, incorporates the logic of flexible accumulation in its multiple instances. The Social Assistance crisis is pointed out as the expression of the social reproduction system, incapable of constituting a future temporality and of guaranteeing the human-genetic civilizational process, expressed in increase in life expectancy, by virtue of the conquering of natural barriers by society.

Alvim starts with a discussion of the strategies of expansion and legitimization of USA interests, through the World Bank / IBD and the International Monetary Fund / IMF. Such strategies were created as multilateral financial institutions of the post-war period aiming at the provision of structuring support to the practices of international trade and being governed by the principle that each country could trade with the others on equal conditions. The author shows how these multilateral institutions are instrumentalized as financial organisms to act politically, as “action mobile fronts” in the strategies of dissemination of the Americanism culture. A premise was the American dollar having become the world currency, making the expansion and mundialization of corporative interests of capitals and of the North American State possible. Such agencies – acting as intellectuals – thus represent the political, ideological and power affinities with regard to the subjacent interests of financing centers, corporate economical groups as well as internal national interests, in acting strategically in the definitions of economic-financial policies of the assisted countries.

Tura’s article explores the relations between the process of capital mundialization and its implications to national sovereignty during FHC’s presidency. The author draws on the notions of mundialization and sovereignty to account for the participation of the Brazilian state agents as true local managers of the interests of transnational capital and as formulators and implementers of actions aiming at the submission of political organs of political sovereignty to the technical organs of economic bureaucracy.

Mattei analyses the main economical transformations which marked the end of the 20th century, characterizing this process as a stage deepening of the globalization process. In addition, the links between such a phenomenon and the expansion of inequalities and social exclusion are highlighted. Economic globalization is an important vector of social exclusion for the periphery countries of the

capitalist system. The national States, in an attempt to provide advantageous conditions to the transnational corporations and following the orientation of multinational agencies (World Bank and IMF), cause an even greater lowering of labor cost and the very deregulation of the labor market. The author points out that while the rich countries hold merely 30% of the positions most exposed to international competition (industry and agropecuary), the poor countries have 70% of the open job positions concentrated on the primary and secondary sectors, which invite intense world competition. This scenario accounts for the fact that it is exactly the workers from peripheral countries that suffer most directly the deleterious effects of globalization, resulting from commercial liberalization and deregulation of the labor market, without any constraints on the part of the macro-economical and national social policies. It is precisely such aspects resulting from the new international labor division that make the connection with the theme of poverty, “globalization of poverty”, since this social *apartheid* scenario is increasingly based on the exploitation of cheap manual labor mainly from the poor countries.

Magalhães addresses the representative democracy crisis deriving from economic concentration at global level, which has allowed the great economical conglomerates to control the media, to manipulate public opinion and to finance costly electoral campaigns. Historical liberal democracies are transformed into semi-oligarchies, where civil rights are being systematically compromised. In face of this crisis, the author suggests that the alternative of the strengthening of participative democracy in Brazil undergoes important experiences such as the strengthening of participative budgeting. The author highlights the possibility for Brazilian municipalities – starting from the 1988 Constitution – to elaborate their Municipal Constitutions, self-organizing their executive and legislative powers and promulgating their Constitution. Democratic decentralization stands out as an alternative for the construction of a dialogical democracy able to regain the credibility of representative democracy. Magalhães draws attention to a new perspective of democracy, called “local dialogical”, associated to a citizen action which is simultaneously local and global and grounded in the strengthening of the networks of participative citizenship communicating with and being strengthened in the world.

Eliás Mortera presents an approach to the investigation of civil organizations and their transnational role, based on the Mexican experience and in the light of gender and environment. He addresses the study of some concepts and theoretical frameworks which attempt to explain civil society, the phenomenon of the emergence of associationism and of transnational networks. In the Mexican context, the author addresses three cases of civil

associations and the networks formed by them, generating longstanding transnational links, which attempt to maintain themselves and impact on political decisions and on the qualification and capacitation of human resources. As Mortera points out, this institutional picture, drawn by the neoliberal consensus, is stimulated by the pressure exerted by the national States to reduce their expenditure, to maximize their exports and to allow for the liberalization of markets without direct intervention of social and political forces. As the author shows, in this context, the market has the capacity for self-regulation and self-depoliticization and, as the contradictions of the globalization process demonstrate, markets also have their social and political dynamics which cannot be separated from economical forces. In this sense, he highlights the importance of monitoring of social projects, like the ones he investigated, by agencies such as the World Bank, the IMF and the Inter-American Bank of Development.

Rocio Santos’s article is devoted to the examination of some elements characterizing the different conceptions of State Reform. As the author points out, the contrast between fordism and flexible accumulation brings about the reassuring of the individual and of private property in the context of the relations between State and society. While in the fordist production collective negotiation prevailed, in the flexible production era negotiation policies come to be located and centered in the individual. While in fordism Welfare State predominates, in flexible accumulation the privatization of collective needs and of social security is reassured. Flexibility in the processes and labor markets implied, among other things, high unemployment rates (structural) and the retrocession of union power. With the collapse of the fordist production model and the turn to the toyotist model and the flexible accumulation model, a process of capitalism re-structuring is observed, through dispersion, geographical mobility and flexible responses in the labor and consumer markets.

Mitjavila and Silva de Jesus examine the characteristics and institutional bases of social individualization processes in contexts of late modernity and globalization of social space. The idea of individualization refers to the mechanisms and processes which turn the perception of social problems into individual problems, by force of family and psychological dispositions. Globalization and individualization present themselves as the two sides of a new mode of societalization. This new pattern of articulation of the individual/society relationships is expressed in the biographization of social problems. This implies the need for the individual to constitute himself as a self-centered individual so as to be able to participate in the protections and material and symbolic benefits associated with the *Welfare State* model. The latter presupposes the existence of the individual as an actor and constructor of his own

biography, identity, belongings, commitments and loyalties. In fact, in the Welfare State, social rights present themselves as individual rights and, more specifically, as rights of individual/workers, since access to protection and material benefits of the Welfare State presupposes a certain relation with the labor market, in the great majority of the cases. Work participation, in its turn, presupposes participation in education and presupposes both mobility and willingness to be mobile. All these exigencies are not binding but require the individual to accept to constitute himself as an individual, to plan, understand, project and act – or to suffer the self-imposed consequences in case of failure. Individualization and globalization constitute, in fact, two sides of the same process of reflexive modernization. Biographization is anchored in a technical-scientific knowledge which plays a fundamental role in the construction and patterned dissemination of *life styles* and *technologies of the self*, according to Foucault. In this sense, some questions become urgent, namely: What political technologies make individualization of social agents possible in globalization times? Or what class of political technologies would be supporting the new strategies of social management typical of contemporary societies? The authors assert that some professions such as Medicine and Social Work are before such challenges, introduced by this picture of institutional transformations.

Simionatto points out that the complexification, diversification and fragmentation of the forms of expression of the State and of civil society have presented themselves as topics of great debates and disquiets in contemporary reality. Such categories have come to be used both to strengthen political participation of society and to justify programs of neoliberal adjustments in the different governmental agendas as well as to depoliticize the actions of the great historical subjects that functioned as vectors of social unification. The author shows that globalization has become stronger and has imposed itself as the only and indispensable way for national States to gain access to the current technological transformations and inclusion in the “capitalist modernity”. Values such as democracy, rights and citizenship have been replaced by the voracious concern with economical stability and by the imperative logic of the markets. Reduced to an ever-growing process of financierization, globalization has come to interfere in the autonomy and sovereignty of the national States, thus intensifying the the problems related to governability and transforming the opening and liberalization of markets into “true simulacra” of democracy. The most obvious consequence is the conservative production of an anti-State culture, the State becoming disqualified as the locus of representation of the interests of the subalternized classes and strengthened in the representation of the interests of the economical elites. A consensus was reached on the issue of state management being inefficient, superfluous,

inept, ineffective, responsible for the public deficit and therefore having the need for its very existence questioned. Thus an anti-State culture is crystallized and a true culture of acquiescence and consent to privatization – fundamental pillar of the new *market society* – is established, The conservative definition of the State/ civil society relationships dispenses with the space of politics, of the possibility of invention and construction of a radically democratic project of society. The author argues that another project of society means to strongly believe in the formation of a political culture able to re-establish the dialectical relationship between the State and the civil society, to impregnate it with participative forms, to strengthen it as a collection of social relations of life in society, of institutions, ideologies, interests, culture and values, of space of construction of hegemony, of “foundation of new States”.

I am certain that the effort synthesized in these articles will bring about proficuous results not only for the academic contribution to a deeper understanding of the issue but also for the desire for the reinvention of utopias, expressed in each word, in each paragraph.

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